

Congresswoman NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

Representing New York's 12th Congressional District

Ranking Democratic Member, House Small Business Committee



Federal Contracts Not Flowing to NY Small Business

As Ranking Democratic Member of the House Small Business Committee, Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez joined her Democratic colleagues and small business owners to release the findings of the fourth annual Scorecard report. The report evaluates 21 agencies on their mandated small business goal achievement.

"We all know the economy is hurting right now. Many companies are buying less, laying off workers, and trying to cut costs," said Congresswoman Velázquez. "But the federal government isn't. In fact, from 2001 to 2002, federal procurement dollars rose 7 percent, from \$220 billion to \$235.4 billion, yet small business opportunities declined. Even though the government bought more last year, it still failed to meet a single one of its small business goals for the third straight year."

In 2002 New York City received \$643 million contracting dollars and small businesses received only \$91 million, or just 14 percent. According to the 1997 census data (the most recent), New York City was the number one location for women-owned businesses and yet in 2002, New York state ranked 12th in federal contract dollars to women-owned businesses. New York state ranked 3rd in the number of minority businesses and yet in 2002, it ranked 16th in federal contract dollars to minority-owned businesses.

The government missed its statutory small business goal of 23 percent and its 5 percent goals for both women-and minority-owned businesses. This failure cost small businesses an estimated \$13.8 billion in federal contracting opportunities. The grades are also the worst they have ever been – out of the 21 agencies examined, there were no A's, 4 B's, 5 C's, 9 D's and 3 F's. The overall grade given to the federal government in Scorecard IV was a D.

The release of Scorecard IV comes more than a year after President Bush promised to take steps to fix the broken procurement system in his small business agenda.



Congresswoman Velázquez and colleagues speak out about federal contracting and small business.

Given the results of Scorecard IV, the Bush plan has failed to give small businesses more opportunities in the federal procurement arena.

"This move is typical of an administration that has said one thing and done another," Congresswoman Velázquez said. "When the president had the chance to live up to his rhetoric during the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, rather than ensure that strong protections for small businesses were in place, the administration removed them. Then it relaxed current procurement policies, making it even less likely that small businesses will get equitable treatment."

"Small businesses just need a chance – a foot in the door so they can show federal agencies what they can do. After all, small businesses make up the majority of all businesses right here in New York City. They are the lifeline of the American economy. Now we just need the federal government to figure it out."

\$1.9 Million for Second Avenue Subway Project

The Department of Transportation recently released \$1.9 million in funding for the engineering phase of the Second Avenue Subway project, which will provide a critical transportation link for many residents throughout Manhattan.

"This project is especially important for low-income residents throughout Manhattan, including the Lower East Side and Chinatown, who depend on public transportation," Congresswoman Velázquez said.

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, the importance of transportation alternatives that stretch the length of Manhattan became more apparent and increased the project's urgency. Congresswoman Velázquez has worked to underscore the importance of this project and pushed for

federal funds to support it, which were recently allocated.

"The East Side has been in need of an additional system that would help to alleviate the overly crowded conditions that currently exist," Congresswoman Velázquez said. "The Second Avenue Subway will not only do this, but it will also provide residents with easier access to public transportation that runs through Manhattan."

The 8.5 mile long Second Avenue Subway will stretch from Manhattan's East Side at 125th Street to the Financial District, which serves Harlem, the Upper East Side, East Midtown, Gramercy Park/Union Square, the East Village/Lower East Side/Chinatown and Lower Manhattan. The new line will include 16 stations and is expected to accommodate more than 500,000 riders each day.

Betances Medical Center Welcomes Federal Money

Federal funding in the amount of \$650,000 was awarded to Betances Health Center from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The award will go towards the expansion of quality health services to both uninsured and underinsured residents of the Lower East Side and neighboring communities.

“Betances Health Center is a community health care facility that promotes the health and welfare of local residents, many who might not have anywhere to turn for quality medical advice and attention,” said Congresswoman Velázquez. “In carrying out its mission, Betances has made a real difference in people’s lives, helping them to live healthier, longer.”

The health center will use the funding to establish a dental program, hire a full-time ob/gyn, and provide health care services to schools in the



Congresswoman Velázquez speaks at Betances.

community. In addition, health care services will be provided to uninsured and underinsured residents who are unable to access health care on their own.

“I know how much this funding will benefit our community,” said Executive Director of Betances Health Center, Wanda Evans. “I am grateful for the support that Congresswoman Velázquez has provided to Betances in helping us secure this funding. We will now be able to provide primary health care to the newly uninsured, many who have lost their jobs post September 11, as well as to our existing populations of underinsured and uninsured residents. Dental and health service programs that are so desperately needed in this area will finally become a reality.”

Betances Health Center, located on the Lower East Side, was founded in 1970 as a grassroots organization, and today serves over 11,000 underserved patients each year. The center remains committed to its mission of promoting quality health care as a basic right for all, regardless of ability to pay.

Child Care Funding Needs to be a Priority

Federal funding was requested for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), the principal federal program supporting child care services for low-income families in the 2004 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill by Rep. Velázquez. She asked that an additional \$11.25 billion in funding per year over 5 years be provided for the grant.

“The President’s 2004 budget request for CCDBG is inadequate and does not address the difficulty meeting the demands for child care,” said Congresswoman Velázquez. “One of the keys to helping low-income parents find and sustain employment is access to adequate child care. This funding would ensure that families transitioning from welfare to work have the services they need in order to become self-sufficient.”

Recent data has indicated that one-third of the states have waiting lists for child care, some with over 200,000 children on the list. Approximately 2.2 million of the nearly

16 million eligible children are receiving assistance – this represents only one in seven children. The situation is predicted to only get worse as more and more states face budget crises.

“Investing in child care is cost effective and saves taxpayers approximately \$7 for every \$1 spent by reducing school dropout rates, welfare dependency, criminal activity and juvenile delinquency,” said Congresswoman Velázquez. “It is critical that we address the need for this grant in order to satisfy the needs for families seeking child care assistance.”

Funding for set-asides for CCDBG programs were also requested, including \$100 million for infant and toddler care, \$10 million for research, \$1 million for Child Care Aware, a national resource and referral line/Web site that helps families find child care, \$19 million for school-age care and \$173 million for quality assurance.

Velázquez Fights Cuts to Federal Voc-Ed Programs

Congresswoman Velázquez called on Congress to restore federal funding for career and technical education, cut by \$333 million in the Bush administration’s 2004 budget.

“Career and technical education programs help students learn and apply the academic and high-level technical skills needed in today’s workforce,” Congresswoman Velázquez said. “These programs are also a key factor in strengthening the nation’s economic competitiveness in the global and technological marketplace.”

Acknowledging the importance of federal investment in career and technical education, Congresswoman Velázquez moved to protect initiatives to integrate academic and technical coursework, provide for career guidance to help students explore postsecondary opportunities, and Tech Prep, a series

of local consortia that link secondary and postsecondary career programs.

“As an integral component of the total education mission, career and technical education contributes to the goals of high student achievement, student retention, and motivation to graduate,” Congresswoman Velázquez said. “We know that students perform better and stay in school when they believe their coursework is relevant to their future endeavors, and career and technical education provides this connection.”

These federal voc-ed programs fall under the Perkins Act and help students experience a “seamless” transition into meaningful postsecondary experiences, including apprenticeships, training programs, technical and community colleges, and four-year higher education institutions.

Grants Awarded to our Community

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

*NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene \$1,088,243

National Credit Union Administration

* Lower East Side Peoples Federal Credit Union \$2,500
For operational enhancements and to address safety and sound issues.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Bureau of Primary Health Center

*Betances Health Center \$650,000
For expansion of quality health services to uninsured and underinsured individuals.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services -HIV/AIDS Bureau

*Betances Health Center \$645,602
For early intervention services regarding HIV Disease.

New York Community Trust

*H.T. Dance Company \$75,000
To develop and promote contemporary Asian and Asian-American dance and performing arts.

Universal Service Administrative Co. -- Schools and Library Division

*Mary Help of Christians School
For Internet access \$13,500
For Telecommunication Services \$4,845.85
*Holy Child Middle School
For Internal connections \$23,805
*St. Brigid School
For Internal connections \$18,778.50